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IMPENDING CRISIS:

OR,

OUR PRESENT POSITION AND

PROSPECTS AS A NATION CONSIDERED.

BY C. H. AUSTIN.

"I delivered the poor that cried, and him that had none to help him. And I break the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoiler of his teeth."—Bible.

UTICA, N. Y.

CURTISS & WHITE, PRINTERS, 171 GENESEE STREET. 1865.



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THE IMPENDING CRISIS.

Among the many nations which people the globe, none are at the present time exciting that world-wide interest as our own. All eyes are turned toward the American Republic, and the pending struggle of these United States for the supremacy of the government over treason and wrong. Our position is one of unparalled interest to the whole race. If the principles at issue on the part of the North, go down in the contest, the hopes of unnumbered millions go down with them. If they triumph, as we hope and believe they will, our long cherished Union will occupy a more elevated plane, as it regards both national prestige and universal freedom.

Oar position as a nation, is a term which involves both our own past history, considered in itself, or in contrast with the history and condition of other nations. In the former sense, let us for the present contemplate the subject.

What is our status as a nation, examined with our eyes fixed upon our past history?

It is one of unexampled development of resources for national defense. This is not only true in reference to finances for supporting between five hundred thousand and a million of men bearing arms—feeding, clothing, and equiping them for nearly four years, but also in surrounding the entire rebel States, with their thousands of miles of sea coast, with a blockading squadron of armed

vessels and ironclad steamers, which for size and formidableness bid defiance to every man-of-war floating on the whole briny deep. Add to this the tens of thousands of horses for cavalry, unnumbered teams, army wagons, ambulances and implements for constructing fortifications, miles of pontoon bridges, caissons and canon, and tents almost without number, together with numerous well furnished hospitals, and buildings for thousands of prisoners of war, and we come to an aggregate of expense which only an American people could meet, and uncomplainingly In the midst of this vast expenditure of men and means, hardly any internal interest or enterprize has essentially suffered! This vast outlay for the contest has, for the most part, been met by government bonds, taken by the friends of Liberty, toiling manfully in the shops, stores, factories and on the farm, enjoying not only the comforts of life, but in most cases, its luxuries! us be more particular in one instance only. In our naval resources the Secretary of War informs us of the following astonishing developement:

"The report of the Navy presents a comprehensive and satisfactory exhibit of the affairs of that Department and of the naval service, which is a subject of congratulation and laudable pride to our countrymen, that a navy of such vast proportions has been organized in so brief a period, and conducted with such efficiency and success.

The general exhibit of the Navy, including vessels under construction, on December 1, 1864, shows a total of 671 vessels, carrying 4610 guns, and 510,396 tons, being an actual increase during the year, over and above all losses, by shipwreck or in battle, of 83 vessels, 167 guns, 42,427 tons. The total number of men at this time in the Naval service, including officers, is 51,000.

There have been captured by the Navy, during the year, 324 vessels; and the whole number of naval captures since hostilities commenced, is 1379, of which 267 are steamers.

The gross proceeds arising from the sale of condemned prize property, thus far reported, amounts to \$14,396,-250 51. A large amount of such proceeds is still under adjudication and yet to be reported.

The total expenditures of the Navy department, including the cost of the immense squadrons that have been called into existence since March 4, 1861, to Nov. 1, 1864, is \$238,647,262 351."

In the next place let us briefly glance at the great principle of national justice. This is an essential element of that virtue which "exalteth a nation." We are reaping a bitter harvest from inhumanity and injustice, hitherto practised upon an injured and defenceless race, by this whole nation, with but few exceptions. The Quakers present one noble exception, worthy to be emblazoned in letters of gold on that historic page which is to pass down to coming ages.

In this particular alone our glorious improvements are well purchased with all the blood and treasure expended. Our venerable Chief Magistrate of the nation spoke unequivocally on this subject in his annual message to Congress. He says:

"I repeat the declaration made a year ago that, while I remain in my present position, I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation. Nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that Proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress. If the people should, by whatever mode or means,

make it an executive duty to reënslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it."

Of this noble declaration we might say in the language of an other:

"This is eloquent majesty of speech! This is heroic dignity of soul! This is unblemished moral grandeur of position! Such words have immortal life. They will go down as a heritage to future generations. O great, struggling, conquering Nation! The way to peace now opens! The President of the United States stands pointing his finger to Liberty and Justice! Never before seemed he so noble in our eyes! God bless Abraham Lincoln."

If "when the righteous bear rule the people rejoice" then this day with such a ruler who in a large measure is to shape the future destiny of 30 millions, we "thank God and take courage." We are far in the advance not only of former Presidents but of ourselves as a nation. Prejudices are fast giving way before the thunder-tread of war. Legislative enactments to uphold and perpetuate the most barbarous monstrosity that ever blackened the pages of history are falling like the leaves of autumn from the musty folios filled with vestiges of national wrongs. The progress of events as indicated by an unknown pen are strikingly significant.

"The first legislative word for liberty was spoken in the Senate by Mr. Trumbull, who, on the 20th of July, 1861, as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, reported a bill to confiscate property used in the military service of the rebels. Mr. Fessenden wanted the bill postponed. Mr. Trumbull, on his own authority, offered an amendment, confiscating slaves so used, and then, of his own motion, laid the bill over, evidently for a long period. God saw it, and the very next day sent upon us the judgment of Bull Run. On the third, the bill which had been put so carefully to sleep was snatched from its couch, and the great debates of the war began. They opened upon the amendment, and, significantly enough, Mr. Breckenridge fired the first gun against it, giving vent, in his remarks, to the following prophecy:

"In my opinion, the amendment will be one of a series which will amount, before we have done with it (if, unhappily, we have no settlement or adjustment soon) to general confiscation of all property, and a loosing of all bonds." Mr. Ten Eyck indulged in that then universal twaddle which has been burned out of our later speeches, about what "was to become of the poor wretches if they were discharged. God knows we do not want them in our section of the Union." The senator may think differently, now that he is unseated by a Democratic victory in New Jersey, which black citizens would have prevented. Pearce, of Maryland, proclaimed the sensitiveness of his constituents to any proposition involving "an act of emancipation, however limited or qualified." Little did he think that, within three years, his State, in convention assembled, would make a Constitution abolishing slavery which her people would ratify! The bill was passed by thirty-three to six-the opposition, save one, being now avowed rebels.

The next step was forbidding slaves to be returned by persons in the army. It took all winter to win this battle. From December to March it raged. Mallory of Kentucky, declared it "involved the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law;" and so it did. Then followed the first act of abolitionism, independently of military questions and considerations—the extinction of slavery in the Dis-

trict of Columbia. Mr. Bayard declared "it would permeate through the entire mass of the slaveholding states, even if compelled as such to return to the Union." Mr. Vallandigham said "there was no calculating where it would end." Still less did he calculate where he would end. That conflict lasted four months. Six weeks more secured the freedom of the territories.

The other landmarks of legislative advance are the bill by which the army-lines were made identical with those of liberty; the enlistment of colored soldiers, for which Mr. Wilson reported a bill on the 8th of July, 1862, and carried it in eight days, after a furious struggle; the recognition of Hayti; the protection of colored persons in Washington; and the repeal of the Fugitive Slave In all these triumphs, great and small, Mr. Wilson's part was important. We believe that to him belongs also the credit of suggesting the enrollment, under the draft, of the slaves of the Border States, which served as a lever for the disruption of slavery in those localities, beginning with Maryland and ending with Kentucky. The grandest work yet remains—uncertain now upon which Congress the credit will fall—that of pronouncing the unlawfulness of human bondage on any rood of American soil"

The most worthy and marked tribute of respect paid to national equity, is the appointment of Salmon P. Chase to fill the vacancy made by the decease of Judge Taney, in the Supreme Court of the nation. In his Dred Scott decision Judge Taney affirmed "the colored man has no rights, the white man is bound to respect." Mr. Chase has been a life long advocate for the impartial rights of man, and an unwavering friend of the oppressed. For such a statesman to be made Chief Justice in times when the

great question of state reconstruction is of such vital importance to the justice, purity, and stability, of the Union, seems to be a special provision of Divine Providence, for present exigences, as well as the redemption of the judicial ermine from the shame and obloquy which sullied its purity in years gone by. Clearly, the finger of destiny points to a glorious future. It is announced also, that Fremont is to be, if not already, appointed, Minister to France; if so, the pioneers of moral sentiment are securing a reward worthy of the advanced position they have taken before the nation. It may turn out, as in another case, recorded by the wise man, a certain man "by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man." Eccl. 9. 15.

The pioneers of truth are not always rewarded in this life. Of such as labor to be seen and honored of men, it still may be affirmed "verily they have their reward." But the monarchs of progressive thought, like lofty mountain summits, stand unsheltered and alone, having for their solace the eternal sunlight of conscious rectitude, and the sustaining favor of the God of truth. All society is generally made up of three classes, viz—Pioneers of sentiment, Moderates, and Conservatives, or, expressed in other words: Agitators, Reflectors, and Opposers.

This first class act from innate convictions of right alone; the second, from popular impulses and opinions; the third, from the fossilized principles and examples of the past. The first look not so much at the present position of society, or even the past, as to the teachings of Divine Revelation, and the "higher law" of right, written upon their moral being, by the pen of inspiration, and the finger of God. They take their lessons from the "tables of stone," and the "fleshly tables" of the

human heart. These two oracles are sufficient for them. Their watch-word rings out on the multitude below studying expediency and compromise, and waiting for the conservatives to get in motion. "Speak to the people that they go forward," or "On to Richmond." Their's is a stormy path. The moderates clamor and strive to pull The conservatives fight, and, if possible, destroy their influence, if not their lives. rates reflect on the causes of such abuse and suffering. and move slowly onward toward their rightful and exalt-In time, the conservatives, ashamed of their ed position. rear position and opposition to the right, take up their bed and walk! These pioneers of sentiment carve a stairway of thought up the rocky heights of moral progression, leaving traces of blood and tears to guide and stimulate coming pilgrims. The conservative is like the stagnant eddies along the stream of passing events; the moderates, like the reeds or straws, borne onward by that current; the pioneer of sentiment, like that ever-active current, swollen by the showers of heaven, cutting out new and more direct and healthful channels. Thus, truth is gaining ground; and men of high moral principle, and far-seeing minds, are being promoted to places of trust and deserved honor. This progressive sentiment must still go on, and the men who have entered into the thickest of the fight, will be remembered, not only by a grateful people passing through the bloody strife, but by coming generations. It is not in the power of oblivious time to blot from the page of history which records this wicked rebellion and our coming trimmph over it, such names as William Lloyd Garrison, Owen Lovejoy, Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith and John C. Fremont. And first of all among the many

poets who have wielded their pens for freedom, will stand the name of that honest and truthful Quaker, John G. Whittier.

Our position, religiously considered, is far in the advance of our former position. The M. E. Church, which numbered a million members in this great republic, has forever erased all provisions for oppressors from its rules and formularies. Other branches of the Church of God are fast following her worthy example. The "casting up a highway for the people, the lifting up a standard, the gathering out the stones," is rapidly going on. And the Christian Church is hopefully looking for her glorious Messiah to come suddenly to his temple, to fill the nation with his glory, and establish his kingdom upon a purer and firmer basis.

Never did the world behold such extended and timely beneficence toward a noble army, as is being exhibited by the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, during this bloody conflict. Among the honored names connected with these humane and noble instrumentalities, will long live those of Miss Dix and George A. Stuart.

Our prospects for ultimate success are gloriously brightening. Thomas has not only whipped the rebel Hood but pursues him with relentless purpose to annihilate his entire army. Sherman has led his noble army through the heart of the rebellion, taken Savannah, captured a large number of prisoners, and taken as a war prize 33,000 bales of cotton, worth several millions of dollars, and is waiting to make other conquests, and finally unite with General Grant to give the finishing blow to the rebellion.

Our position before the whole world is exerting an

influence on other nations, to be measured only by the duration of coming ages, and the millions of inhabitants that people the whole globe. I cannot better present our prospects and the magnitude of our conflict, than to present it in the language of another:

"We are too much innovators to be popular in the Old World. We are radically aggressive without intending to be so. Our opinions, our institutions, our experiment, threaten the established order there. Therefore, the men who stand by that order, actuated by the motive of self-preservation, look at us as hostile to themselves. Personal hatred they have not but they fear the results of our trial, the tendencies of our new civilization. Since space has been so almost annihilated we have become as it were their neighbors. This increases the hostile feelings. When they see us in trouble and danger they have no sympathy for us. How can they watch with hope and sympathy the success of a government which is the antipodes of their own, when that success will modify or upset their own? They believe, or many of them do, sincerely in their system. They disbelieve the soundness of ours. They will naturally welcome any evidence of the correctness of this opinion. They will readily accept it. We must not look for aid and comfort from them. Λ southern lord is a rebel. force of the same influences that have made him a rebel and a traitor to the American Idea, the foreign aristocrat sympathizes with this rebel. But where we find a real Democrat, in the North or in the South, he is steadfast in his support of the American Doctrine. Where you find a real Democrat. or Liberal, in Europe, or elsewhere, you find a sympathizer with this American Democrat. This is all plain. Our contest is the same

old one of "Divine Rights" against Popular Rights. The party divisions were made long ago. In this special contest of ours one party the world over adheres to the American Popular Party. The other supports the Aristocratic and rebellious party.

"Sometime ago we showed how the English people had naturally divided into two great parties in our war, obedient to the dictates of their sentiment, their hopes and their aspirations. The Aristocraey of birth, and of wealth too, took the side of the rebellion because it represented their interests. The Democracy groping, almost powerless, but aspiring and laboring and hopeful gave us their cordial sympathy. The champions of that Democracy, men of liberal opinions, and of intellectual ability and courage besides, were on our side-were our champions. It is so on the Continent as in England. The tongue of the Democratic or Liberal party in Europe speaks for us. We ought ever to be grateful for the services of Mill, Smith, Cairns, Hughes, Bright, Codden and others in England, and of Gasparin, Henri, Laboulaye and others in France. The great heart of this party beats with us. Where they can serve us they do so intrepidly, constantly and effectively. So long as we are true to our idea we cannot win the sympathy of the lordly classes. We demean ourselves in attempting to do so. We ought not to think it strange that they oppose us. They obey the natural impulse to save them-But we ought to be true friends of our friends in the Old World who look to us as having the power to save them from the assaults of lordly power that menaces them with destruction.

"If any consideration will confirm our resolution not to cease in our conflict till we are assured of complete

victory, it is the appeal which the Democracy of the Old World make to save ourselves and them. fail it dooms them to hopeless subjection. If we succeed there will yet be a beacon to light their pathway, up which they will continue to struggle. Garabaldi, in referring to our conflict says: "Not only do I hope from it the abolition of slavery but I consider the question to be one affecting all mankind, and woe to the world if the North does not come out victorious from the struggle." So they all think. The condition of the progressive party in Europe is a perilous one now, that demands all the encouragement and support which is possible to afford them. In the article of Professor Goldwin Smith published in the December number of the Atlantic Monthly he describes that condition. The wave of progressive opinion which for some time swept on impetuously. threatening to engulf the barriers that obstructed its movement, has spent its great force. There is a slack In politics there is lassitude and sometide just now. what of despondency; there is not the same eager hope and the same leaping of determination there was. In the religious sphere there is an analogous weariness and decay of hopes and cessation of efforts to rise above the effete creeds of the churches, and to get planted on a firmer and more durable faith. Parties are not so aggressive as they were. The moral sentiment has relaxed its high tension. The extreme Liberal party in England is coalescing with the nearly extreme Conservative party.

"While this old conflict wears this aspect in Europe it is being fought with unexampled energy, determination and destructiveness on our soil. Its abatement in the Old World may in part be attributed to its intensity here. By common consent they have laid aside their weapons to watch with intense interest the struggle here. almost every man of them-nay to every man of themits issue with us is of personal interest. It bodes him good or ill according to its decision for the government It is not a wonder that the Aristocratic or the rebellion. party throw their influence into the scale in behalf of their friends and their champions. It is not a wonder that the Democratic party which is struggling against such odds and under such disadvantages, implore us to be true to the holy cause. What hope for them when we fail? To what years of oppression, of insult and wrong will they be inevitably doomed by the destruction of this Republic-a result which will be accepted as the practical demonstration of the unsoundness of their theories of government. The secret instinct of both the Old World parties predicts the results of our contest. They cannot be mistaken. It is here that the long conflict which has extended through the civilized world is to be decisively concluded. It is not only for the Union, for thirty-six States and thirty millions of people that we are contending, but the great Democratic party —the party of the People—the world over, that we now Wo be ours if we falter and fail. But more still, in the words of the Italian patriot and Democrat: "Wo to the world if the North does not come out victorious from this struggle." Philosophic historians have the belief that each great nation has specific functions to perform in the wise and benevolent economy of Divine Providence. The function of the American nation is clear. It is perhaps the grandest that any people ever had. If the nation fails, how far will the failure curse? If it succeeds, how great, how wide, how permanent the blessings of its success?"

Lastly.—The change of the Constitution, so as to prohibit forever slavery from the entire domain of the whole country, is one of the most hopeful omens of the crisis. The dawn of a brighter day gladdens the hearts of all who properly understand this contest. Kentucky is righting up her noble Ship of State, Maryland is free, and Missouri has triumphantly vindicated the principles of freedom, by inaugurating her emancipation Constitution, just in time to influence Congress on the coming vote on the amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

What an auspicious moment! Many, whose true hearts have throbed with deepest interest during this painful struggle, are trustingly turning their eyes toward Heaven exclaiming, "Father, the Hour is Come." Now. when well-meaning, but mistaken men are hastening to Richmond on self-constituted peace missions; now, while Congress has an ascendancy of Liberty men in point of numbers, who were elected by their constituents in view of such legislation; now, while the Confederacy are discussing the expediency of arming the slaves; now, while other powers are embroiled by our action in reference to the St. Albans raiders, if we fail to speak in our Congressional halls for God and humanity, the great principles of freedom may be irrecoverable lost to Americans, and the glorious sun of our proudest hopes set to rise no more. Will the men of the thirty-eighth Congress wantonly turn away from those imperishable honors, which Providence and posterity are awaiting to confer upon them, or will they leave these honors for other men? Will they "loose the bonds of wickedness,

and undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free?" Can they rationally hope for anything honorable and abiding from peace envoys. The rebellion must be The leaders of it, and not the people subjuconquered. gated by their military despotism, control, to a great extent, the entire Confederacy. To treat with them would but invite further treason in the case of similar aspirants. It would be awarding honors to them instead of giving them that just retribution which their awful crimes demand. Let them lay down their arms and the war will cease. The blood of a million soldiers dyes in crimson their assumed robes of official standing. The laboring multitudes of every nation would execrate our folly, and the grinding monarchies of the entire earth would laugh and rejoice at the imbecility of our government. We are fighting for great principles as well as for an honorable peace. They commenced the war to overthrow those principles—we prosecute it not only to maintain the dignity and supremacy of the Government, but to build more firmly those principles they seek to destroy. In the language of Hon. Wm. H. Seward, it is emphatically

"THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT."

What's earthly peace where justice dies,
And principles decay?
Better for such they ne'er had been,
Or perished in a day.
Christ came not to bring peace to wrong,
His coming, who abides?
For three 'gainst two, and two 'gainst three,
E'en households he divides.

Wild thunder storms and piercing hail Lay waste the fruitful field, But purer air, and blooming health,
Such dread correctives yield,
And thus the direful scourge of war,
The nation's life shall save,
While many a son and brother dear,
Shall fill a soldier's grave.

We must first break the fallow ground,
Then broadcast truthful seeds,
For he who sows among the thorns
Shall harvest naught but weeds;
Then drive the plough the nation through,
Upturn a richer soil,

The wheat will flourish only where, The noxious weeds we spoil.

Stern winter's cold, and searching frost,
Shall aid the laborer's hand,
And God's blest sunshine, and the rain
With verdure clothe the land.
All o'er the field in harvest white,
The golden sheaves we'll bind,
To feed the lowly, bless the poor,
And raise the abject mind.

We learn that even mingled quartz,
Their treasures rich unfold,
By passing through the crushing mill
To separate the gold;
And sweetest flowers their odors give,
When rudely they are bruised—
Thus freedom's blessings flourish most,
By sufferings diffused.

Expanding heat the steamer drives,

To plough the briny main—
And thus progressive truth shall move
'Neath war's most fiery reign.
Bold traitors scoff and lend their aid,
The nation to destroy—
While loyal virtue toils in tears,
And waits the coming joy.

Meanwhile, let good men raise their hearts,
In hopeful, earnest prayer,
To Him who holds the destinies
Of freedom in his care;
When slavery dies the war shall end,
The nation's turmoil cease,
And on the dark and angry cloud,
Appear the bow of peace.

Then all the pioneers of truth,
Shall hold their jubilee—
Lay by their arms, and start the plow,
The nation ever free.
And such as measured swords with wrong,
In God's great might alone,
In heaven at last, shall share a crown,
And honors near the throne.

IRONICAL ODE.

Composed for the occasion of laying the corner stone of the Slave-holders Confederacy—" The corner stone of the Confederacy is Slavery."—A. H. Stephens.

We lay beneath this corner stone,
Enshrined in zinc and mortar,
The names of Davis, Floyd and Toombs,
And Quantrell of Lawrence slaughter;
We'll show the world that slaves were made
To increase our pride and treasure—
Let "mudsills" toil to earn their bread—
The great should live in pleasure.

Some say what's built, on human wrong, Can't stand the wear of years, That's but the saying of an ancient Book, Full of horrid woes and fears; It says "as we to others give,
In turn to us is meted"—
We'll show the world that is not so,
When the North is well defeated.

The "perilous times" so long foretold,
May come with sad dejection—
To purpose vile we'll sell our kin,
And rnin all affection;
No tender ties shall contravene,
The F. F. V's promotion—
We claim dominion o'er the land,
And prowess on the ocean.

No crowns are won in quiet times,
No thrones are built by reason—
The royal robes of Knightly Lords
Are often made by treason;
Let titled monarchs through the earth,
Learn by our future sequel,
Our fathers falsely taught of yore,
"All men are free and equal."

What, though a million soldiers fall,
In bloody scenes of battles,
The abolition North shall yield,
Our right to human chattles;
We'll drape the land in weeds of woe,
Fill Northern homes with anguish—
And cause their ereed of "higher law,"
Through coming years to languish!

For us our sympathizers, North,
Will fan the rebel fire—
And this we know, as time must show,
Will raise our fabric higher;
Hoist the new flag—the stars and bars
Shall float in royal favor,
The poor may grind, the rich shall rise,
And tyrants rule forever.





